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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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(b)(3)

The Tunisian Situation

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have consolidated their positions in the area and that French paratroops had that morning completely sealed off the native quarter of the city. He observed that no one was allowed in or out of the old city, and that the paratroops had commandeered shops, bars, and other establishments all around the perimeter for quarters and had set up emplacements at all strategic spots along the perimeter. French officials in Paris, while admitting the encirclement of the native quarter in reprisal for the capture of some paratroopers and civilians who had "wandered" into Tunisian hands, claim that five exit points were established and that the area is controlled to prevent unauthorized traffic and to "pen up but not stifle" the area until the captives are returned.

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and strung barbed wire at strategic points adjacent to the naval air base, and that the Tunisian Army has set up a defensive line in the hills surrounding Bizerte.

The governor of Bizerte claims that 400-500 French reinforcements had arrived in Bizerte on 31 July, and Tunisian morale, raised by Hammarskjold's visit, is again ebbing.

A French Foreign Ministry official reiterated on 2 August that De Gaulle would not accept or be guided by any third-party mediation, especially from the UN. This official declared that the Bizerte matter could not be settled in New York and that the best advice to give Tunisian Defense Minister Ladgham, who was then in Washington, or other Tunisians, "including Bourguiba," was to start confidential negotiations.

Meanwhile the French representative at the UN, apparently on instructions from Foreign Minister Couve de Murville, outlined in a 2 August conversation with American representatives France's position on talks with the Tunisians. He said it was the "absolute French prerequisite" that the first phase of talks take place at Bizerte directly between Tunisians and French, at

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